



Weekend Plus

From Bollywood to Brookhaven

Indian star comes to BNL for evening of storytelling, song and dance

By Peggy Spellman Hoey

Ramesh Gupta, who works at Brookhaven National Laboratory, believes Sharda's stories should be passed on.

In true Bollywood tradition, the stories of Sharda, whose singing career began in Bollywood, the term for the Indian film capital, or the Eastern counterpart of Hollywood in California, will be retold through live song on stage in Berkner Hall at Brookhaven National Laboratory on Saturday, Jan. 5. Bollywood star Sharda will appear along with other singers and dancers in a multimedia presentation featuring original movie scenes in the background.

Mr. Gupta, a scientist from Jaipur, a town near New Delhi, who has been in the U.S. for 22 years, said the traditional music event was organized with the twofold purpose of returning his countrymen who live nearby back to their roots and increasing

'It was a hit around the world.'

Sharda

cross-cultural understanding for those who have not yet visited his native land. "It is so they can keep their culture, their tradition and their art and pass it on to the next generation," said Mr. Gupta, who is president of Brookhaven Lab's Indo-American Association, the event's sponsor.

Mr. Gupta explained that Bollywood movies, which are a cross between Western movies and Broadway musicals and feature singing and dancing, are a very important part of Indian culture. He noted that Bollywood, which gets its name from the region formerly called Bombay, now Mumbai, where most of the movies were produced during the industry's renaissance period 40 years ago, is a multimillion-dollar industry.

Often the movies tell stories of heroes and heroines who in the midst of overcoming great adversity, sing and dance their way through opulent sets. However, unlike the Hollywood musicals of old that the movies are modeled after, Bollywood movies featured actors who lip-synched their lines.

"Most of the songs are romantic," Mr. Gupta said.



Sun photo courtesy of Brookhaven National Laboratory

Popular Bollywood singer Sharda will perform at Brookhaven National Laboratory's Berkner Hall Jan. 5.

"Either they are greatly in love and are having a good time, or they are away from each other and suffering," Mr. Gupta said of the typical Bollywood story line.

During Bollywood's heyday in the 1960s, Sharda sang many of those typical stories, including Mr. Gupta's favorite, "Around the World with \$8." In the musical and its title song, the hero leaves his home with only \$8 in his pocket and loses his path

'A BOLLYWOOD MUSICAL EVENING'

Berkner Hall, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Saturday, Jan. 5, from 7 to 9:30 p.m.

Before Dec. 29, tickets are \$15 for general admission, \$20 for VIP seats in the first four rows.

After Dec. 29, tickets are \$17 for general admission, \$22, VIP seats.

Tickets are available at:

www3bnl.gov/bera-iaa/bmusical/reserve_form.php.

after a villain intercedes and separates him from his love. He travels to foreign cities — Rome, Italy, Berlin, Germany and New York.

"It was a hit around the world," Sharda said of the song.

With the song's Bollywood success behind her, Sharda's fame took her to music halls around the world. In addition to singing, Sharda is also an accomplished songwriter and composer who has produced movies for UNICEF. Presently a music teacher, Sharda has also produced an album of Ghazals, or poetry. Sharda, who lives in Levittown, moved to the U.S. with her husband in 2000.

Sharda said she believes her singing not only serves as entertainment but also as a healthy mental stimulant for those who might long for the distant shores of their homeland.

"I think [music] is very important because when you go back in your memory, your mind becomes light and you go and dwell in that time," Sharda said of an individual's musical experience. "You become very light and lively because you enjoy the music. So mentally you are in the world again, and it helps your health."

For more information on Sharda, log on to her Web site at www.titliudi.com. For more information on her upcoming performance, log on to www.bnl.gov/bera/activities/iaa/Bollywood/details. Tickets are available at the BERA store or from S. Khalid in Building 725D, both at the Brookhaven Lab, or from the Web site www3bnl.gov/bera-iaa/bmusical/reserve_form.php.

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